

FLIGHT JACKET

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Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif.

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Navy League recognizes women

Story by Lance Cpl. Scott T. McAdam
Jr.
MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

SAN DIEGO – The San Diego Council Navy League hosted the 2005 Naval Services Enlisted Women of the Year awards March 29 at the Admiral Baker Clubhouse in San Diego.

“This 45th celebration was a wonderful opportunity for commands and the Navy League to honor our enlisted women, not only for their individual accomplishments, but those of the thousands just like them around the world,” said Mike Bucchi, president, San Diego Council Navy League. “I’m so proud of them.”

The event featured women in the Marine Corps, Navy and Coast Guard whose parent command is located in San Diego County.

There were a total of 35 women nominated for the awards, 13 of whom are with 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing.

Each nominee was required to write a one page essay themed, “What being in the military means to me.” The league chose two winners based on the best essays.

The award winners were 3rd MAW Petty Officer 2nd Class Melissa D. Cornell, Marine Aircraft Group 39, and Petty Officer 1st Class Mickenszie J. Pearson, Marine Wing Support Squadron 374, Marine Wing Support Group 37.

“Receiving the award is overwhelming, I really did not expect it,” said Cornell a 34-year-old Florence, Ala., native. “We didn’t know who won until now. I didn’t know if everyone would be



Female service members gather for a photo March 29 during the 2005 Naval Services Enlisted Women of the Year awards at the Admiral Baker Clubhouse in San Diego. The event recognized women in the Marine Corps, Navy and Coast Guard whose parent command is located in San Diego County. *Photo by Lance Cpl. Scott T. McAdam*

expecting a speech, luckily they weren’t.”

Both winners were awarded a \$1,600 scholarship from National University in La Jolla, Calif., among other prizes provided by various corporate sponsors.

“It is one thing to identify individuals and their achievements, but it is even better when they can be presented with tangible items as well,” said Brig. Gen. John M. Paxton, commanding general, Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego. “We are very appreciative of the Navy League and the corporate sponsors for putting on this event.”

San Diego Council Navy League is committed to continuing this tradition of

recognizing the women of our sea services in the years to come, according to Ira J. Lott, executive administrator and retired sergeant major.

The Navy League was founded in 1902 with the encouragement of President Theodore Roosevelt. The league is a civilian organization dedicated to the education of U.S. citizens and elected officials as well as support of the men and women of our sea services and their families.

“These women have distinguished themselves in the eyes of their command,” said Paxton. “It is always great to recognize anyone in the service for going above and beyond.”

VA improves healthcare for women veterans

By Rudi Williams
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – There was a time when women veterans didn’t feel welcome at Veteran Affairs Department medical facilities, but the causes of such feelings have changed dramatically over the last few years, the VA’s top advocate for women’s health said.

“We’re seeing a dramatic increase in the number of women veterans turning to VA for health care,” said Carole L. Turner, Veterans Affairs’ national director for the women veterans health program. “And the satisfaction they’re expressing about the health care they receive at VA is improving tremendously.”

Turner said VA has a full continuum of comprehensive medical services, including health promotion, disease prevention and primary care. There is also women’s gender-specific health care, such as hormone replacement therapy, breast and gynecological care, maternity and limited infertility treatments. There is also substance-abuse treatment, mental health, rehabilitation and long-term care.

“If a specialty isn’t available in-house, VA will contract out with providers in the community,” said Turner, a former Air Force nurse who has more than 20 years of VA experience.

Military sexual trauma treatment also is available, including counseling and treatment for any emotional or physical condition experienced as a result of sexual trauma experienced while on active duty.

Turner said women often seek treatment for “the same kind of health conditions that men experience – diabetes, heart disease, orthopedics care, dental care.” However, she added, women veterans also require certain unique health care services, such as maternity care.

There also are differences in the types of assistance services women seek from the VA. “Women who are homeless generally come with families or children,” Turner said. VA has pilot programs for homeless women veterans with and without children at 11 medical facilities across the country.

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Maj. Gen. Samuel T. Helland
Commanding General
3rd Marine Aircraft Wing



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April marks ‘Month of Military Child’

By Steven Donald Smith

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – The Department of Defense has long understood the value of caring for and celebrating children of service members.

April is designated as the Month of the Military Child, underscoring the important role military children play in the armed forces community. The Month of the Military Child is a time to applaud military families and their children for the daily sacrifices they make and challenges they overcome.

The Marine Corps Air Station Miramar Bob Hope Theatre will be hosting free live stage entertainment and a children’s movie every Thursday in April.

Military children face many obstacles unique to their situation, such as having a parent deployed for extended periods of time and frequently being uprooted from school.

“Military children endure a great deal of change as a result of a parent’s military career,” Douglas Ide, a public affairs officer with the Army’s Community and Family Support Center, said. “The military family averages nine moves through a 20-year career. And in doing so, their children must say goodbye to friends, change schools, and start all over again.”

Throughout the month, numerous mil-

itary commands will plan special events to honor military children. These events will stress the importance of providing children with quality services and support to help them succeed in the mobile military lifestyle, defense personnel and readiness officials said.

“Installations are honoring military children by providing the month packed with special activities that include arts and crafts shows, picnics, carnivals, fairs, parades, block parties and other special activities, focusing on military children that highlight the unique contributions they make,” according to a DoD fact sheet.

The DoD will also launch a new toolkit series called “Military Students on the Move.” The toolkit includes material designed to promote more efficient and effective methods of moving military children from school to school. The toolkit includes material for parents, children, installation commanders and school officials, DoD officials said.

In addition, the U.S. Air Force recently launched its “Stay Connected” deployment program kits in conjunction with the Month of the Military Child. The kits include items like teddy bears, writing pens and disposable cameras.

“The purpose of the Stay Connected kit is to provide young people and parents

an avenue to keep a connection during the deployed members’ time away from home,” Eliza Nesmith, an Air Force family member programs specialist said. “The items in the kit come in pairs, so that the young person and parent can have an item that will help them remember each other.”

Throughout the month of April, the U.S. Navy child and youth programs will also be hosting special programs and events to salute military children. These events will include, carnivals, health screening for children, youth talent shows, and more, Navy officials said.

“Events that celebrate the Month of the Military Child stress the importance of providing children with quality services and support to help them succeed in the mobile military lifestyle,” Larrie Jarvis, a Navy child and youth programs analyst said.

Army bases will plan their own events such as fun runs, bicycle safety courses, carnivals, fishing derbies, community service projects, and other events geared specifically toward children and youth, Army officials said.

The Month of the Military Child is part of the legacy left by former Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, who died March 28. He established the Defense Department commemoration in 1986.

VETERANS, continued from page 1

VA also works to educate women on ways their health issues differ from men’s – for instance, how heart disease manifests itself differently in women than in men. She said VA is working with health care providers to ensure they’re aware of and looking for signs and symptoms in women that they wouldn’t ordinarily think are attributable to heart disease.

Turner emphasized that “all VA facilities aren’t created equal.”

“Some are very urban, highly affiliated academic teaching facilities, and some are very rural, kind of like a general-practice arrangement,” she said.

But no matter what type of facility women visit, they’re going to get quality breast care, either within the VA center or outsourced, she said. Studies indicate that newly diagnosed and treated breast cancer patients often suffer from such quality of life problems as insomnia, weight gain, chronic fatigue, depression and anxiety. “VA is very well equipped to help the social ramifi-

cations of disease,” Turner said.

“The VA offers one-stop care for the majority of biological, psychological and social health care problems women might be experiencing,” Turner said.

VA also has published privacy standards, particularly for treating women. Gone are the days when women didn’t feel welcome at VA hospitals and voiced concerns about the lack of privacy, Turner said. “We also have waiting areas that are like subunits so women can wait separate and apart from men,” she said. “The environment has been designed so women can bring their children, so they know that they’re safe and secure.”

Turner attributes much of VA’s success in treating women veterans to women program managers who are advocates at every medical center. “They’re there to help women veterans navigate the system,” she said. “They try to ensure that the types of issues and concerns women might have about the environment or the care they receive are being addressed by staff and facility leaders who are sensitive to those needs.”

Miramarks



SSgt. Donald D. Fowlds
Radio repair technician
MWCS-38

“It reminds me of all the sacrifices I have made as a Marine.”



MSgt. Ronald F. Chesney
Detachment SNCOIC
MACS-1

What do you think of when you see morning or evening colors?

“It makes me think of the tragedies we’ve had and fought through.”

Police cadets conduct training at Miramar

Story by Lance Cpl. Scott T. McAdam Jr.
MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

The San Diego Police Academy participated in less-lethal chemical weapons training at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, March 23.

The students at the academy are required to undergo training in order to become familiar with those non-lethal weapons that they will carry out in the field. Every weapon that an officer carries requires training in order to master it, said John Stricklin, police agent, SDPA.

The chemical agents the students trained with were “CS” gas and olio resin spray, known as “pepper spray.”

The academy is very appreciative for the NBC training grounds the Marine Corps allows them to use here.

“The best thing to happen to us is that our old training facility burned down in the cedar fire,” said Dan Hall, police officer, SDPA. “The Marine Corps has been gracious enough to let us use their facilities, this is a service we never take for granted.”

The first day of chemical training consists of classroom lectures explaining the different chemical agents, their histories, how to deploy them and what to expect during exposure. The second day is the practical application. They first learn how to deploy the agents and then they are actually exposed to them.

“It’s half bookwork and half hands on,” said Hall.

The CS exposure is a four-step process. During the first step the canister is popped and the students crouch and move around the smoke. The instructors call this dancing. It shows the students that as long as they are outside the cloud of gas, it will not affect them.

Step two is the actual exposure. The students are called into the gas chamber in groups of two. Without masks they are asked to give their full identification.

“We do this to ensure the students are fully exposed to the chemical agent,” said Hall. “We also look for any signs of panic or problems other than the regular symptoms of the CS gas.”

If the student panics he will immediately

be escorted out. The student is then given a chance to recover. After he recovers he is told what he is expected to do. Then the student is given a “dry run” before going back into the gas chamber.

“The third step is designed to build confidence in the students’ abilities to tolerate CS gas,” said Hall.

The third step is the scenario of a lost officer in a house full of CS. The students go into the chamber in groups of four to six and escort the lost officer out.

“Usually around half of the class is prior military service so they already know what to expect and they handle the training rather well,” said Stricklin.

The fourth step of the exposure training is a decontamination brief. The students learn how to properly wash off CS gas and pepper spray from themselves.

The second portion of the exposure training was the pepper spray exposure. The students covered one eye and had to be sprayed with the substance in the other eye. The students then wash their eyes out and let the substance run its course.

“Exposing the students to this is not only necessary to let them carry the non-lethal weapons, but also, if they inadvertently get contaminated out in the field, they know what to expect and how to deal with the problem,” said Stricklin.

“We always try to leave the facilities in a better state in which we found them to try to help out with the upkeep,” said Hall. “We really couldn’t ask for more cooperation with the Marine Corps on letting us use these facilities. Since I have been here, the Corps has been accommodating in everyway.”

The Marine Corps has allowed San Diego law enforcement to use some of its Miramar training facility for many years and sometimes officers and Marines have the opportunity to train together.

“It’s fun anytime they do training out here. It builds camaraderie between us and helps bridge the gap between institutions,” said Lance Cpl Stefan C. Stelzenmueller, Nuclear Biological Chemical Specialist with Marine Wing Headquarters Squadron 3, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing.



A San Diego Police Academy student moves around smoke produced by a CS gas canister March 23 at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar. The students are required to undergo training in order to familiarize themselves with the non-lethal weapons that they will carry in the field. Photo by Lance Cpl. Scott T. McAdam Jr.

Got tickets?



Sgt. Maj. Dennis W. Reed (right), sergeant major, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, accepts tickets March 21 for a San Diego Gulls hockey game from Stacie Woolf (left), whose company donated the tickets to the Marines of 3rd MAW. This is the second year Marines have received support from Woolf’s company. Photo by Lance Cpl. Scott T. McAdam Jr.

Colors ceremony honors Marines, sailors

Story by Lance Cpl. Taylor Poulin

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

An important ceremony was held March 31, during the traditional morning colors at the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing headquarters building.

The ceremony was intended to recognize the outstanding Marines and sailors of 2005 and present them with awards.

Cpl. Jesse G. Hansen, radar repairman, Marine Air Control Squadron 1, Marine Air Control Group 38, 3rd MAW, received the 2005 Marine of the Year award and Lance Cpl. Kenneth G. Hansen, flight line mechanic, Marine Helicopter Training Squadron 303, Marine Aircraft Group 39, received the 2005 Junior Marine of the Year award.

Seaman Ismael Soto, religious program specialist, 3rd MAW, received the 2005 Blue Jacket award and Petty Officer 1st Class Eduardo M. Achay, corpsman, MAG-13, was named the 2005 Sailor of the Year.

“This ceremony is in recognition of the Marines and sailors who have been exceptional in their line of work,” said Maj. Gen. Samuel T. Helland, commanding general, 3rd MAW.

The colors are raised every morning and lowered every evening to remind us of the sacrifices made by all service members past and present, and to remember why we serve.

“When I see the flag being raised it reminds me of my grandfather who served in Iwo Jima and how proud I am of him,” said Hansen, a Denver native. “It just represents what we fight for.”

Marines from 3rd MAW, gathered and formed into three platoons to witness the ceremony. The Marines present stood at attention as they saw their fellow Marines and sailors receive awards for their outstanding performance and duties.

“It is always good to see the colors being raised,” said Hansen. “I’m glad we could have all these Marines here to watch it together.”



Third Marine Aircraft Wing Marines, Pfc. Noel C. Alonzo, supply clerk (left), Sgt. Matthew W. Santilli, fleet assistance program noncommissioned officer-in-charge (center), and Cpl. Harry Thomas, administration clerk, prepare to raise the morning colors March 31 at the 3rd MAW headquarters building at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar. The ceremony also included awards given to the 2005 Marine and Junior Marine of the Year and to the senior seaman and blue jacket of the year. *Photo by Lance Cpl. Taylor Poulin*

PMO trains to save lives with CPR

Story by Lance Cpl. Taylor Poulin
MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Marines with the Provost Marshal’s Office participated in a Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation class March 21 at the Branch Medical Clinic, Marine Corps Air Station Miramar.

“We do this type of training to obtain a better understanding of how to properly apply CPR to a victim in case of an emergency,” said Cpl. William E. Hargesheimer, military policeman, MCAS Miramar. “It is our job to be ready for anything.”

The Marines attending the class received hands-on training in perform-

ing CPR, using an Automated External Defibrillator, lowering a choking victim to the ground and recognizing a stroke or heart attack victim.

An AED is a portable electronic device that diagnoses and treats cardiac arrest by reestablishing an effective heart rhythm. This treatment is called defibrillation, which applies an electric shock to the entire heart muscle, evenly clearing the electrical activity of the heart, hopefully allowing it to resynchronize.

PMO learned how to use this device properly in case of an emergency and the different term usage with the machine.

The class was conducted by a formal presentation with practical application in between the different sections of the class.

“It was a refresher of the basic CPR steps and then we took a written test,” said Hargesheimer, an Amarillo, Texas, native.

“We conducted this class to make them more confident in these skills and give them detailed knowledge,” said class instructor Petty Officer 2nd Class Victor Losoya, squadron corpsman, Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 323, Marine Aircraft Group 11, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing.

“Since we are the first responders

we help save lives,” said Cpl. Christopher R. Castleberry, training noncommissioned officer, PMO, MCAS Miramar. “This type of training will help us do that.”

PMO trains every Tuesday to upgrade their skills in different elements that pertain to their job. As the “first responders” of the base they are in charge of keeping everyone else on base safe, according to Castleberry, a Portangles, Wash., native.


When PMO goes on patrol they can be confident in their skill to do their job proficiently.

With this knowledge, Marines can go right into action, said Losoya.



Cpl. William E. Hargesheimer, military policeman, Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, checks the pulse of a practice dummy March 21 during Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation practical application training at the Branch Medical Clinic, MCAS Miramar. *Photo by Lance Cpl. Taylor Poulin*

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES!



MCAS Miramar needs servicemembers from all ranks, occupations, experiences, backgrounds and upbringings to participate in the Guest Speaker Program. If you are interested, call the Community Relations Department at (858) 577-4333.

An appreciative audience awaits



A six-man Special Reaction Team with the Provost Marshal's Office, Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, takes cover behind a glass blanket March 29 during a hostage rescue training scenario at MCAS Miramar. After several hours of failed negotiating, the Marines used training explosives to gain entry to the house and detain the simulated suspect. *Photo by Lance Cpl. Taylor Poulin*

SRT conducts hostage rescue training

Story by Lance Cpl. Taylor Poulin
MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

The Provost Marshal’s Office, Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, conducted a hostage rescue training session March 29, at MCAS Miramar, to freshen up the skills of their Special Reaction Team.

“We do this training to understand what our capabilities are,” said Maj. Jerry Chavez, deputy provost marshal, MCAS Miramar. “It’s good to know we have coordination with all these departments.”

The SRT is a six-Marine team acting as the base Special Weapons and Tactics force. The team is used in situations such as hostage rescue. The team also works with the San Diego Police Department, the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, and Explosive Ordnance Disposal.

The training scenario consisted of a suspect taking his family as hostages. Marines on patrol called in a report to PMO and they reacted by notifying SRT, SDPD, NCIS, and EOD. When they all arrived on the scene, they planned to enter the house and rescue the hostages.

A Remote Operated Neutralizing System, provided by EOD, approached the house and delivered a phone to the suspect so he could talk to a negotiator.

“This robot is a very good tool for us to use,” said Chavez. “It has a very long camera range and it has a hand so it can touch things the human hand could not.”

After contact was made, the SRT continued approaching the house to aid the RONS in case of any mishaps.

After a long waiting process, the hostages grew hungry and requested food. The RONS delivered food, and the SRT rescued the two children who were sent out to retrieve the food for the remaining hostages.

Now with two of the hostages out of the house, EOD then proceeded to place explosives on the side door and blow it open for the SRT.

The team entered the home and took the suspect into custody and rescued the remaining hostages.

This training benefited PMO by teaming up all the assets PMO has from EOD to SDPD and NCIS, said Cpl. Gabriel R. Hill, K-9 handler, PMO.

The Marines, especially the SRT, learned how important communication is

and put in use their knowledge of the proper steps to taking a suspect into custody, said Chavez.

“We need to know these things in case of any type of emergency,” said Cpl. Paul A. Williams, point man, SRT, PMO.

PMO schedules this type of scenario training once every six months. This training will help refresh their skills for any incident that may occur. There are constant changes in PMO’s rules and regulations. Frequent training helps keep them proficient

in knowing these rules and using them, said Hill, a Portland, Ore., native.

The MCAS Miramar SRT conducts this type of realistic training in order to be prepared for any contingency and to ensure the safety of all personnel on the air station.



Marines from the Special Reaction Team, Provost Marshal’s Office, Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, provide security March 29 during a hostage rescue training scenario at MCAS Miramar. The SRT is a six-Marine team acting as the base Special Weapons and Tactics force. *Photo by Lance Cpl. Taylor Poulin*



After preparing the F/A-18D Hornet behind them for take off, two ordnance technicians with Marine Fighter Attack Training Squadron 101, Marine Aircraft Group 11, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, set up and signal to the next aircraft March 29 during their pre-flight checks on the flight line at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar. Ordnance Marines are responsible for the safe and proper employment of training ordnance used by the squadron to train fighter pilots before they advance to an operational squadron. Photo by Cpl. Paul Leicht

Ordnance Marines, sailors keep air ops rollin’

Story by Lance Cpl. Taylor Poulin
Combat Correspondent MCAS Miramar

Marine and sailors with Ordnance Division, Marine Fighter Attack Training Squadron 101, Marine Aircraft Group 11, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, keep the F/A-18 Hornets flying day and night to help train pilots for the fleet.

“Aviation ordnance is the backbone of aviation,” said Petty Officer 1st Class Nathaniel Stewart, aviation ordnance technician, VMFAT-101. “In general there would be no need for Marine aircraft to travel in enemy territory or fly overhead to protect Marines on the ground.”

Ordnance helps keep the flight schedule moving by loading aircraft with the ordnance needed for the pilots to train and better their skills.

VMFAT-101 is a training squadron for Hornet pilots. Most of the ordnance is not live, unless there is a call for a live bomb dropping, said Petty Officer 3rd Class

Michael A. Seraaj, aviation ordnance technician, VMFAT-101.

Flying four variations of the Hornet, VMFAT-101 has the largest amount of F/A-18s aircraft on the base. They also provide assistance to other Navy squadrons using the Combat Arms Loading Area.

“(The CALA) is where we load live bombs, rockets and other assortments of real weapons the F/A-18 can carry into combat,” said Stewart.

The ordnance division continually promotes and improves safety.

VMFAT-101 is safety oriented, using the proper safety equipment such as a protective head gear known as a “cranial,” safety goggles, earplugs, and steel-toe boots, said Sgt. Erik L. Swanson, collateral duty inspector, VMFAT-101.

“Our primary goal is to have ‘zero’ personnel-caused errors,” added Stewart.

The ordnance crews work three shifts. One 10-hour

shift Monday to Friday from 5:45 a.m. to 4 p.m. and two 12-hour shifts Monday through Thursday.

“We put in at least 50 hours a week in support of our mission, which is to train pilots and refresher training for pilots coming back through the training syllabus,” said Stewart.

The shop always has Marines transferring to a deploying squadrons who need them during missions overseas.

“We get new Marines from school and once they are well trained and qualified to perform their jobs, they are off to take the fight to the enemy in the fleet,” said Stewart.

The atmosphere in the shop is a high operational tempo atmosphere where there is always something to accomplish. From loading and maintaining the squadron’s F/A-18s as a complete weapon system that is mission capable to receiving munitions from logistics Marines, VMFAT-101 ordnance is ready to support.

Padres salute military during home opener

Story by Lance Cpl. Taylor Poulin

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

SAN DIEGO – Major League Baseball’s San Diego Padres kicked off their 2006 season April 3 with pomp, ceremony and a salute to America’s military.

The opening day highlighted a military color guard, and the National Anthem, played by Grammy award-winning trumpeter Chris Botti, followed by a fly-over.

The Padres, defending their National League West Champions title, raised their championship banner during the opening ceremony.

The first pitch was thrown by the San Diego native 2005 Heisman Trophy winner Reggie Bush, a two-time All-American at the University of Southern California and a 2002 graduate of Helix High School, La Mesa, Calif.

Facing off against the San Francisco Giants and homerun king Barry Bonds, the Padres’ crowd of more than 43,000 fans, including many local San Diego service members, cheered through nine innings of America’s favorite past time.

The game started off with a bang by the Giants with a ground-rule double by Bonds and a sacrifice fly that drove him home to score the game’s first run. The Padres quickly reacted when Mike Piazza, who made his San Diego debut, hit a solo homerun that tied the score 1-1. Piazza’s homerun marked his 398th making him 43rd on the all-time homerun hit list and just two homers away from the 400 homerun club.

After five hard-fought and exciting innings of play, Padres infielder Khalil Greene, ended the scoreless drought with a two-run homerun, putting the Padres up, 3-1.

Padres pitcher Jake Peavy, pitched a strong seven innings, giving up only four hits, with five strikeouts. Peavy captured the win for the Padres 6-1 while



A Navy Color Guard posts April 3 on the infield at Petco Park in San Diego, before the playing of the National Anthem to kick-off the Padres opening game against the San Francisco Giants. The ceremony was held as a salute to service members. Photo by Lance Cpl. Taylor Poulin

advancing his pitching record to 1-0.

In addition to their opening day victory, the Padres are looking forward to another championship season with further salutes to San Diego service members.

The Padres have many ceremonies to appreciate the military including Military Opening Night, to be played April 22 at 4:05 p.m. against the New York Mets, where early attenders will receive camouflage jerseys.



Chief Warrant Officer 3 Charles A. Whitlock, officer-in-charge, Explosive Ordnance Disposal, Marine Wing Support Squadron 274, Marine Wing Support Group 37 (Reinforced), 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward), picks up unexploded ordnance March 24, that will be destroyed outside of Al Asad, Iraq, in a demolition blast. The purpose of this blast was to destroy damaged and hazardous ammunition as well as unexploded ordnance collected on and around the base. The mission of the unit is to neutralize all threats to the coalition forces from chemical, biological, nuclear and improvised explosive devices that present a threat to installations, personnel and equipment. *Photo by Lance Cpl. James B. Hoke*

EOD aids fight against unused ordnance

Story by **Lance Cpl. Brandon L. Roach**

3rd Marine Aircraft Wing

AL ASAD, Iraq – A “BOOM” is heard in the distance and a cloud of smoke rises outside the perimeter March 24, as Marines with Explosive Ordnance Disposal destroy items that could harm U.S. forces.

“We had to dispose of unexploded ordnance as well as damaged or hazardous ammunition,” said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Charles A. Whitlock, officer-in-charge, EOD, Marine Wing Support Squadron 274, Marine Wing Support Group 37 (Reinforced), 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward). “It could not be stored or shipped due to its hazardous condition.”

Upon arriving at the blast

site, the EOD technicians began to set up the blast pit and place the M-112 block demolition, commonly referred to as C-4, amongst the collection of ammunition and compressed gas cylinders.

According to Whitlock, many of the disposed items come from different areas on or around the base. Other ammunition and weapons destroyed, come from detainees held for questioning.

Once the demolition blast was set up, the Marines took cover inside their armored humvees and drove to a safe distance.

With the charges set and the detonation cord activated, the Marines sat tucked behind thick plates of steel, waiting to see their hard work pay off.

Minutes after they had parked their vehicles outside of the blast area, a massive fireball erupted from the ground. The shockwave from the blast sent waves of powdered sand in every direction, as an enormous mushroom-shaped cloud filled the calm-blue sky.

Five minutes after the blast, a single Humvee with EOD technicians inside, drove to the blast site to ensure it was safe.

The range noncommissioned officer-in-charge inspected the area and gave the range “all clear” call over the radio. The grounds were then inspected for explosives that didn’t detonate to make sure insurgents couldn’t use anything that was left behind.

The vehicles were then lined up in convoy formation and

driven back to the security of Al Asad.

EOD is a volunteer Military Occupational Specialty because of the risk factor involved.

“We hand pick the finest Marines we can find,” said Whitlock. “We select Marines with the most drive, determination and requisite intelligence, so they can make it through the school and meet the demands of the fleet after they graduate.”

Each EOD Marine is trained exactly the same. They have special training standards that they must uphold, as well as a high set of safety standards guided by Standard Operating Procedures.

“The big issue is if someone discovers unexploded ordnance or something suspicious they call us,” said Whitlock. “That’s

what we’re here for.”

When an emergency is called in, there is no time to hold a safety brief and hand out SOPs for the mission. The Marines revert to the training they have received to guide them through missions.

The mission of Marine Corps EOD is to provide the capability to neutralize all threats to coalition forces from chemical, biological, nuclear and improvised explosive devices that present a risk to installations, personnel and equipment.

“We train every day, every hour and every moment as time permits,” said Whitlock. “Due to the heavy operational load and shortage of EOD personnel worldwide, we often train as we operate, and operate as we train.”



Is this your Civic?

The above vehicle has been marked for impound by the Provost Marshal’s Office. To avoid having the vehicle towed, please store it in the Marine Corps Community Services or Traffic Management Office lots. Abandoned vehicles at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar present security risks as well as enviromental and safety concerns. PMO attempts to identify and contact vehicle owners of illegally parked, abandoned vehicles prior to tagging the vehicle with a Department of Defense notice. Vehicles are then scheduled for towing three days following the notice. For more information, call 577-1276/4139.

The following vehicles have been impounded and need to be claimed by the owners. Towing fees average \$113, storage fees \$28 daily. For more information call 577-1461.

Vehicle:	License:
1969 Ford Mustang	CA#4WHX650
1990 Chevy S-10	CA#7R20297
1996 Shoreliner Trailer	CA#4DL4081
UNK.Honda 400EX	CA#168K62
UNK.BMW 328I	CA#5NRT357
UNK.Honda Civic	MA#62FR50

Miramar Movies

The Bob Hope Theater is located in Building 2242, and will be featuring the following movies. Outside food and drinks are not permitted. For more information, call 577-4143 or log on to *www.mccsmiramar.com*.

Friday:
6:30 p.m. Date Movie (PG-13)
9:00 p.m. *Freedomland (R)

Saturday:
6:30 p.m. The Pink Panther (PG)
9:15 p.m. *When a Stranger Calls (PG-13)

Sunday:
1:00 p.m. *Curious George (G)
6:30 p.m. *Final Destination 3 (R)

Wednesday:
6:30 p.m. Ultraviolet (PG-13)

Thursday:
1:30 p.m. Learning Safari Wild Animal Show - LIVE Month of the Military Child (FREE)
2:00 p.m. Cheaper by the Dozen 2 (PG)
6:30 p.m. Eight Below (PG)

* Indicates the last showing for that film.

Military Tax Center

The Marine Corps Air Station Miramar Tax Center is still open, providing service members and their families with free tax services.

The center is located at Building 6250 and is open Monday thru Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. With the tax deadline of April 15, the cener will be open Saturday April 8 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Religious Services

The Chaplain’s Office is located in Building 5632 and coordinates regularly-scheduled worship services. For the location and meeting schedules of religious activities, contact the Chaplain’s Office at 577-1333.

Sunday:
9:30 a.m. Protestant worship service
11 a.m. Roman Catholic Eucharist
Wednesday:
7 p.m. Baptist service
Monday-Friday:
11:30 a.m. Roman Catholic daily mass
Jewish:
7 p.m. First Friday of the month MCRD
7:30 p.m. Last Friday at Edson Range Chapel

Scholarship Program

The Homefront American Scholarship Program will be awarding a total \$20,000 in scholarships to military dependents in May. The dependents who recieve the scholarships will each be awarded \$1000.

For more information call (949) 293-5307.

Thrift Shop Web Site

Miramar’s Navy Marine Corps Relief Society Thrift Shop has a new Web site.

The site contains information about what services the non-profit organization can provide for service members and their families. For more information, visit the Web site at *www.mccsmiramar.com* The thrift shop is open Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Miramar Technology Expo

A Technology Expo will be hosted April 13 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Marine Corps Air Station Miramar Officer’s Club.

The Expo will feature more than 25 vendors with hands-on demonstrations of the most technologically advanced products available. For more information call (240) 994-1966.